

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119484 TOSEC 010198

FOR SONNENFELDT AND HARTMAN

FOLLOWING REPEAT LISBON 2839 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN

LONDON MADRID PARIS NATO DIA USCINCEUR 20 MAY

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2839

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: CONFUSION AND TENSION

REF: A. LISBON 2510

B. FBIS LONDON 200411Z MAY 75

C. LISBON 2801

D. LISBON 2786

E. LISBON 2399

SUMMARY: CONFUSION AND TENSION CONTINUE IN PORTUGAL AS THE
AFM ASSEMBLY ENDED WITHOUT A MOVE AGAINST THE MODERATES BUT
WITH HEAVY FIRE AGAINST THE POLITICAL PARTIES, ESPECIALLY
THE SOCIALISTS. DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ARE GREATLY WORRIED BY A
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PCP-INSPIRED ATTEMPT TO OUST REPULICA EDITOR RAUL REGO.

THE MRPP CAME OUT SECOND BEST IN AN ATTEMPT TO OUTFLANK THE PCP. AFM BAD-MOUTHING OF PARTIES AND INCREASING AFM TALK OF DEVELOPING A DIRECT LINK WITH THE PEOPLE MAKES IT MORE PROBABLE THAT PARTIES MAY BE PUSHED ASIDE. END SUMMARY

1. AFM ASSEMBLY: THE AFM ASSEMBLY OF MAY 19 CONCLUDED (SEPTTEL) WITHOUT TAKING ACTION AGAINST THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER MODERATE OFFICERS. WIDELY RUMORED BEFOREHAND, THE FACT THAT THE ACTION DID NOT TAKE PLACE IS ATTRIBUTED BY A RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCE TO THE PRESIDENT'S JIGGERING OF THE AGENDA SO THAT ANGOLA OCCUPIED MOST OF THE DAY. THIS MEANT THAT THERE WAS NO TIME TO DEAL WITH SUBJECTS ON WHICH THE MODERATES COULD BE EXPOSED TO A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE.

2. THE ASSEMBLY WAS PRESENTED WITH AFM PAPERS ON THE MAY 1 INCIDENT (REF A) AND ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES. THE MAY 1 PAPER LAID ALL THE BLAME ON THE SOCIALISTS AND CALLED FOR DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN THE AFM AND PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND THE WORKERS COMMITTEES IN ORDER TO BYPASS THE PARTIES. THE PAPER ON PARTIES CIRTICIZED ALL THE PARTIES AND ACCUSED THEM OF TRYING TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE AFM, LEAVING AFM ISOLATED WITH MINORITY PARTIES, EXPLOITING POSSIBLE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE AFM BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE ELECTION RESULTS, AND CREATING A PERNICIOUS CLIMATE OF PARTISAN DISPUTE.

3. OTELO'S VIEWS: THE ATTACK ON THE PARTIES IS TAKING PLACE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A RECENT EXPRESSO INTERVIEW (REF B) OF COPCON DEPUTY COMMANDER BRIG. OTELO CARVALHO WHERE, INTER ALIA, HE SAID HE NOW REGRETTED THAT AFM HAD ALLOWED THE PARTIES ANY POWER FOLLOWING THE APRIL 25 REVOLUTION. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO UNITE THE AFM WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES AND REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS TO FORM A "LIBERATION MOVEMENT."

4. REPUBLICA DISPUTE: THE ATTEMPT TO PURGE RAUL REGO OF THE NEWSPAPER REPUBLICA IS VIEWED WITH ALARM BY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. THEY FEEL THAT IF A TRUE BLUE ANTI-FASCIST LIKE REGO CAN BE PURGED BY THE PCP THERE IS NO HOPE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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A FREE PRESS IN PORTUGAL. FOR EXAMPLE, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR RECEIVED AN UNANNOUNCED VISIT AT HOME FROM A REPUBLICA WRITER WHO HAD JUST COME FROM LAST NIGHT'S PRO-REGO DEMONSTRATION (REF C). HE ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE IN GETTING A JOB OUTSIDE PORTUGAL. REPUBLICA IS NOW SHUT DOWN BY ORDER OF THE INFORMATION MINISTRY AWAITING A COURT DECISION ON THE DISPUTE.

5. DENOUEMENT OF MRPP-RAL-I AFFAIR: EVENTS SURROUNDING

THE MRPP-RAL-I AFFAIR OVER THE MAY 17-18 WEEKEND (REF D) HAVE NOW BEEN CLARIFIED SOMEWHAT. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES CLOSE TO THE MRPP, THE MRPP GOT WIND OF A RIGHTIST PLOT AND DECIDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INFORMATION IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH ITS CREDENTIALS AS AN EFFECTIVE ANTI-FASCIST ORGANIZATION AND TO BRING ABOUT A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE MRPP AND THE BEST KNOWN, FAR LEFT MILITARY UNIT, RAL-I (NOW KNOWN AS RALIS), THEREBY OUT-FLANKING THE PCP.

6. THIS EFFORT FAILED WHEN COPCON COMMANDER OTELO CARVALHO AND ARMY CHIEF FABIAO OPPOSED THE PLAN TO HAVE A REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL SET UP AT RALIS. RALIS COMMANDER, MAJ DINIZ DE ALMEIDA UNEXPECTEDLY (TO MRPP ANYWAY), CAME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF CARVALHO AND FANIAO AND ACTUALLY LED THE ARMORED CAR COLUMN WHICH REMOVED THE PRISONERS FROM RALIS. RALIS AT THAT POINT WAS COVERED BY MRPP ACTIVISTS, WHO WERE BLOCKING THE MAIN ENTRANCE. DINIZ DE ALMEIDA DROVE HIS ARMORED CARS THROUGH A STEEL GATE AND WITH WARNING SHOTS AND TEAR GAS BROKE THROUGH THE CROWD.

7. THE MRPP HAS NOW BEEN CONDEMNED PUBLICLY BY THE RALIS, BRIG CARVALHO, AND THE AFM ASSEMBLY. OUR SOURCES SUGGEST THAT THE MRPP MAY HAVE BEEN SUCKERED INTO THIS OPERATION BY THE PCP. IN ANY CASE THE MRPP FINDS ITSELF THOROUGHLY DISCREDITED WITH THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. BOTH CAPT. MAIA OF THE CAVALRY SCHOOL AND COL. NEVES OF THE COMMANDOS HAVE ROUNDLY DENOUNCED THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST THEM BY THE MRPP (REF D), AND THEIR REPLIES WERE GIVEN GOOD COVERAGE IN THE PCP-DOMINATED MEDIA.

8. COMMENT: THE CONFUSION AND TENSION ON THE POLITICAL SCENE, THE RUMORED ATTEMPTS TO PURGE THE MILITARY MODERATES, THE CONTINUAL FIRE AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES, THE COMMUNIST-DIRECTED ATTACK ON RAUL REGO, THE FREQUENT

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MENTION RECENTLY BY THE AFM OF ESTABLISHING DIRECT LINKS TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH THE WORKER COUNCILS AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES, AND THE INCREASING AFM IMPATIENCE WITH THE PARTIES-- ALL SUGGEST THAT THE AFM MAY NOT BE WILLING TO LET THE POLITICAL DYNAMIC WORK ITSELF OUT IN THE FASHION ANTICIPATED BY THE SOCIALISTS (REF E). THE STEADY ATTACKS ON THE PARTIES, ESPECIALLY THE SOCIALISTS, MAKE IT PROBABLE THAT THEIR AUTONOMY OF ACTION WILL BE FURTHER REDUCED IN SOME FASHION BY THE AFM.

CARLUCCI UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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